



## Prioritizing Services That Touch Residents

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, July 05, 2010

Hope your Fourth of July holiday was fantastic. On June 29, prior to the holiday the Council made the final vote for a balanced budget. More than 20 people spoke at the Council meeting and all but one advocated that the Council not outsource janitorial services but rather keep the janitorial staff employed, since they provide an incredibly valuable service. You would have thought janitorial was listed in the city charter by the speakers' comments.

All but one of the speakers advocating for the janitors were affiliated with a labor union or religious congregation. The religious leaders ranged from Methodist to Lutheran to Jewish to Presbyterian. I understand the brotherhood and sisterhood concept of labor unions uniting to advocate for spending taxpayer money to help another union member. I also understand the calls for social justice from the clergy. However I wonder if the janitor at the church or temple makes approximately \$55K a year plus a 250 percent pension match and free lifetime medical (minus co-payments) for themselves plus spouse/partner. My guess is no.

The Council was called, "shameful" and criticized for "picking on the most vulnerable." There were undertones of racism, since the majority of janitors are not caucasian.

The notion that janitors make the least amount of money is incorrect, as I have stated for months. A recreation leader in our parks and community centers makes in salary only \$38,001 and a senior recreation leader makes \$54,496. A library clerk makes \$50,897 in salary only while a senior janitor makes \$54,787 in salary only.

So since all three of these positions come from the same pot of money and around the same dollar amount, then it is a trade-off. If the Council chose to not lay off and outsource the janitors we would have to make those same cuts elsewhere to lay off staff that work in our community centers, or lay off staff that work in our libraries.

I chose and will choose to keep services that actually touch the million-plus residents of San Jose over services that do not add value for our residents. The ability to have a community center or library open is more valuable to our residents than who cleans City Hall. The new janitorial staff will be paid like janitors at Cisco and Apple but possibly more with the city of San Jose's living wage requirement.

A big thanks you to the Alameda Business Association and Larry Clark for another great Rose, White & Blue Parade on Sunday! Congratulations to Cleveland Ave for winning 1st prize in the parade (three years in a row) for their creative float.

Finally, as an observer early this morning it was quite a sight to see six out of 35 stations working on suppressing the fire at Trace Elementary. Thank you to our Fire Department—fortunately there were no major injuries.

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